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ABSTRACT

In fiscal year 1981 the Chitimacha Day School operated on its lowest budget since the new school opened in 1978. School enrollment has not significantly changed since 1978 (a decline from 37 students to 32), yet each year the budget suffers debilitating reductions. Chitimacha children are thus provided an education at an inadequate and unacceptable level. The school comes under the jurisdiction of two educational agencies, the Louisiana State Department of Education (which supplies a limited amount of financial aid) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (the BIA provides the majority of the school's funding). Problems of funding and staffing reduction could be alleviated if the BIA would provide a small school adjustment for schools that have 50 students or less. Since the Day School is a major factor in the cultural, social, and educational life of the community, rather than reducing the activities, staff, budget, etc., with appropriate funding its current purpose could be expanded to make it a true community school. The BIA should provide technical assistance for developing proposals to funding sources. The BIA should assist in developing a per pupil hour and grades to be taught in one group standard for teaching staff. (BRR)

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CHITIMACHA DAY SCHOOL REPORT

June, 1981

"A Study of Critical Issues"

J. King

L. Simmons

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

In fiscal year 1981, the Chitimacha Day School operated on its lowest budget since the new school opened in 1978. School enrollment from year to year has not significantly changed since 1978, yet each year the budget suffers debilitating reductions. Chitimacha children are thus provided an education at an inadequate and unacceptable level. The Chitimacha people can ill-afford a return to the educational and social inequities of past decades.

Purpose of Report

The Chitimacha Tribe does not believe the underlying intent of P.L. 95-561 and its related Indian School Equalization Formula (ISEF) was to have such a devastating impact on Indian schools. Yet, for the Chitimacha Day School, this has been the result.

The purpose of this report is to relate the concerns of the Chitimacha Tribal Council and School Board, to state and analyze the problems of the school stemming from budget reductions, and to propose effective recommendations to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other appropriate agencies, to better enable them to serve the needs of the Chitimacha people.

Historical Background of School

In 1978, the doors of the new 1.2 million Chitimacha Day School opened. In that year, the Chitimacha people realized a long sought dream for their children and their community.

The struggle for quality education has been a lengthy, valiant endeavor. The original Chitimacha school was founded in 1934. At that time, the tribe acquired an old condemned building from the St. Mary School System. This one - room structure was moved onto the reservation and became the first reservation school facility for Chitimacha children.

Until the mid-nineteen 60's Indian children were not permitted to attend Louisiana public schools and the one-room school facility was the only means, short of sending children off to distant Indian boarding schools, to obtain a

basic education.

Since the tribe's federal recognition, education has been the primary consideration. The viability of the Chitimacha Day School is fundamental not only to the academic growth of the children, but to the vitality of the entire tribe. The day school is an essential transmitter of Chitimacha tradition and culture, not to be found in any public or boarding school.

Related Information

In an effort to make objective recommendations and establish minimum standards for school teaching personnel and student performance, the following sources were consulted for this report:

- Title XI of P.L. 95-561: The Education Amendments of 1978 (Reference).
- Louisiana Standards for State Certification of School Personnel, 1976.
  1. Minimum Requirements for Approved Teacher Education Programs for Elementary Teacher (Grades 1-8).
  2. Minimum Requirements for Nursery School and Kindergarten Teachers.
- Louisiana Minimum Standards for Writing, Grades K-12. Publication identifies the language art skills taught in grades K-12 which are related directly to the development of student writing proficiency.
- Louisiana Minimum Standards for Mathematics, Grades 1-12. Publication provides a basic list of mathematical standards.
- Minimum Standards/Maximum Goals for Reading in Louisiana, Grades 1-12 (excerpt for grades K-8). Publication provides a basic list of reading skills.
- Public Law 95-561 - November 1, 1978. "Education Amendments of 1978."
- Education Standards: Bureau of Indian Affairs Operated Schools (Draft).

SECTION 2.0: REPORT FINDINGS

It is the intent of this section to present in descriptive statistical and narrative form the characteristics and condition of the Chitimacha Day School. This section will identify the various school data elements; however, no attempt will be made to analyze the information in this section. The information in Section 2.0 should provide a substantive background from which analytical recommendations can be offered.

Because the Day School is not considered as the "typical" Bureau of Indian Affairs school due to its size and the number of students, it serves the information herein to be reviewed with the school's uniqueness in mind. The section is divided in two parts; the first dealing with general statistical data, while the second part outlines basic standards of an educational institution.

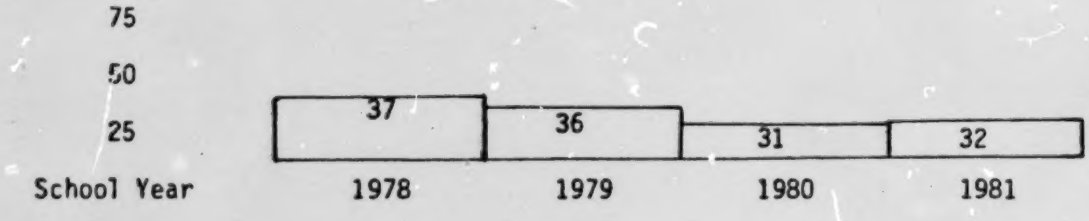
Statistical Information

Chitimacha Day School is a small school in terms of numbers; however, it is large in terms of importance to the continuity of community - school spirit. Numbers, tables, charts, and facts cannot measure the feelings of people and the pride of the community which is embedded in the hearts of each family on the reservation. While it is not the intent of the report to focus on attitudes and feelings, they should not be forgotten.

Since school year 1978, enrollment at Chitimacha has averaged 34.67. Figure 1 below also includes projected enrollment for 1981.

Chitimacha Day School Report - June, 1981
Figure 1: Student Enrollment by School Year

Students Enrolled

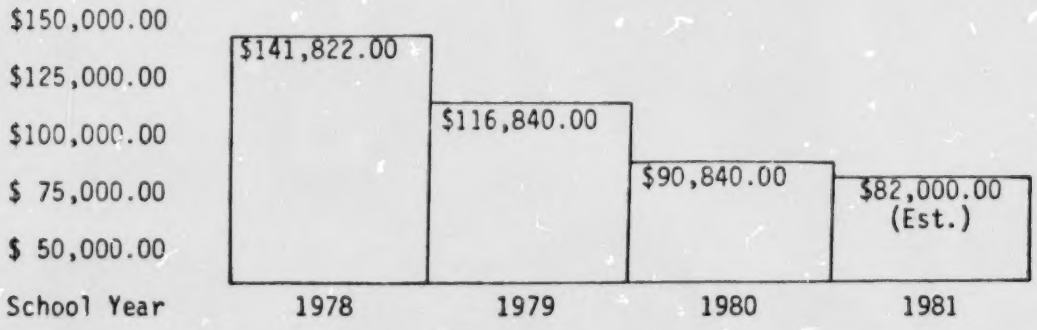


In addition, according to tribal records on new births, the school anticip tes an increased enrollment during the next four years with 1983 seeing the largest potential enrollment since 1977, which was 41. It is evident the reservation will experience an increase of households for the next few years. In the first four months of 1981 alone four homes have been added to the reservation. The planner for the Chitimacha Tribe has projected the reservation population to exceed 300 by the year 1985.

Comparatively, the budget for the school has continued to shrink although at a much quicker pace than the school enrollment. Respectively, the two figures, 2 and 3, reveal the decreases in the budget and a comparison of enrollment and budget percentage decrease.

Chitimacha Day School Report - June, 1981

Figure 2: Bureau of Indian Affairs Funding Received by School Year



As indicated, the budget has steadily declined for the past three years and is projected to decline even more in school year 1981-82. In comparison, Figure 3 illustrates the vast difference in the budget and enrollment declining percentages.

Chitimacha Day School Report - June, 1981

Figure 3: Budget Changes (+, -) as Compared to Enrollment Changes By School Year

School Year	Budget	Enrollment
1979	-20%	-2%
1980	-28%	-15%
1981	-10%	+3%
Overall Average	-19.33%	-4.67%

The decreases in the budget have exceeded the enrollment reduction almost five times. Another factor revealed in our research is that local public school budgets have steadily increased during the past three years. The St. Mary Parish School Superintendent (Louisiana) states the school has increased its per pupil expenditure approximately $300.00 between 1978 and 1980 (federal funding not calculated in figure).

The budget reductions have caused the school to reduce the number of staff from 7½ to 6. Figure 4 shows the staff teaching load for school years 1980 and 1981.

Chitimacha Day School Report - June, 1981

Figure 4: Staff Teaching Load by School Year

School Year: 1980 - 81

Grade Level	Staff Available	No. of Grades Taught	No. of Students	Possible Classes To Be Taught Per Day 1/
Teaching Staff:				
K - 4	1 Teacher	5	19	29
	1 Aide	-	-	-
5 - 8	1 Teacher	4	12	24
	1 Aide	-	-	-
Reading and Language Arts (Title 1):	1 Teacher	8	30	18
	1 Aide (½ time)	-	-	-
Non-Teaching Staff:				
Administration & Support	1 Principal	-	-	-
	1 Cook	-	-	-

School Year: 1981 - 82

Teaching Staff:				
K - 4	1 Teacher	5	17	29
	1 Aide (½ time)	-	-	-
5 - 8	1 Principal/Teacher	4	13	24
	1 Aide	-	-	-
K - 8	1 Teacher (Title 1)	-	-	-
	1 Aide (½ time)	-	-	-
Non-Teaching Staff:				
K - 8	1 Cook	-	-	-

1/ Figures derived by multiplying the number of required courses to be taught each day by the number of grades taught.

In 1980, a full-time principal was employed to administer and manage the school operations; he was assisted by 3 full-time teachers, 2½ aides, and a cook. In school year 1981, the principal will take on teaching duties in addition to the normal administrative work load. Other staff at the school will include 2 teachers, the equivalent of 2 aides and a cook.

The school staff work load in school year 1981-82 will increase due to the reduction in staff. As noted in figure 5, the total number of staff work hours available are 10120; 2560 hours less than the preceeding year. These figures do not include extra hours worked by staff for extra-curricular activities.

Chitimacha Day School Report - June, 1981

Figure 5: School Staff Work Hours Available by School Year

Grade Level	School Year: 1980 Staff Available	Work Hours Available
Teaching Staff:		
K - 4	1 Teacher	1680
	1 Aide	1680
5 - 8	1 Teacher	1680
	1 Aide	1680
Reading & Industrial Arts (Title I)	1 Teacher	1680
	1 Aide (½ time)	840
Non-Teaching Staff:		
Administration & Support	1 Principal	1760
	1 Cook	1680
	TOTAL:	12680
	School Year: 1981	
Teaching Staff:		
K - 4	1 Teacher	1680
	1 Aide (½ time)	840
5 - 8	1 Principal/Teacher	1720
	1 Aide (½ time)	840
K - 8	1 Aide	1680
	1 Teacher (Title 1)	1680
Non-Teaching Staff:		
K - 8	1 Cook	1680
	TOTAL	10120

Another factor affecting work load and the degree and amount of individual attention each student will receive is the large number of classes and grades for which each teacher is responsible.

The following figure 6 illustrates very clearly the number of classes and grades the 1981-82 faculty will teach (also shown in figure 4).

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Figure 6: Possible Classes to be Taught Each School Day by Grade

Subject	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Reading	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Language Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Math	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Science		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Studies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health/Phy. Ed.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

In the past students have generally shown academic improvement as evidenced by a random selection of five students who were tested prior to involvement in the Title I program and after participation. Figure 7 reflects the composite academic scores (reading, math, language arts) in 1977 and in 1980.

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Figure 7: Pre-Post Composite Grade Equivalent of Five Randomly Selected Students

Student	Grade Level May, 1977	Composite Grade Equivalent Rating May, 1977	Grade Level October, 1980	Composite Grade Equivalent Rating October, 1980	Amount of Change
#1	3	4.3	7	6.9	+.6
#2	3	4.3	7	8.0	-.3
#3	4	4.9	8	9.1	+.2
#4	1	2.5	5	5.2	-1.3
#5	4	5.8	8	12.5	+2.7

School Operations Information

The school, because of its affiliation with the federal government, comes under the jurisdiction of two educational agencies, the Louisiana State Department of Education and the Education Branch of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The state has established standards which the school strives to comply with and provides a limited amount of financial aid. In addition, the school administrator reports periodically to the state on attendance, textbooks, and staff. The BIA, which provides the majority of the school funding, has established draft education standards which are to be adopted in the near future. Periodic reports on the budget, attendance, vehicle, receiving and descriptive narrative are filed with the local BIA agency.

Another institution which may eventually "come into the picture" is the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools which will accredit the school to assure education of the highest quality.

Because of the voluminous standards and rules and regulations which govern the local school operations, only important excerpts or outlines are presented herein. A cursory review of The State Handbook for School Administrators, The State Handbook Certification of School Personnel, various state course minimum standards, and the draft BIA education standards have revealed there are many similarities and for the sake of time only an outline of the BIA standards will be presented and can be found in exhibit A.

SECTION 3.0: REPORT CONCLUSIONS

Before gathering and analyzing the data and staff/board discussions, it was unclear what precisely were the problems facing the Chitimacha Day School. However, as the analysis of the data neared the end, specific problem areas began to surface. This section will not focus on problems alone, but will address conditions and provide basic recommendations for consideration.

Condition: Chitimacha Day School is a small school (it may be one of the smallest in the BIA), thus creating a funding and staffing reduction. Much of the BIA policy addresses the "norm school" and fails to fairly address the Day School which is an extreme case. All schools have minimum operating budgets and it is the opinion that the school has reached its minimum level if quality education is to continue.
Recommendation: To provide a small school adjustment for schools that have fifty students or less.

Condition: The Day School is a major factor to be considered in the cultural, social, and educational life of the community.
Recommendation: Rather than reduce the activities, staff, budget, etc. of the school; increase the activities, staff, and budget for the purpose of creating a true community school. Expand the breadth of its current purpose. Strengthening the school program would strengthen the social order of the community rather than weaken it.

Condition: Funds from other sources, federal and non-federal, are needed to help strengthen the school program.
Recommendation: The Bureau of Indian Affairs should provide technical assistance to the school for developing proposals to federal and non - federal sources.

Condition: The school because of its size is in a precarious position which creates budgetary problems, staff work overload, and less individual attention for students. According to the Louisiana State School

Administrators Handbook; page 73, it states, "No teacher shall be required to teach more than three grades in a combined group"; whereas, at Chitimacha, teachers teach five and four grades respectively.

Recommendation: Realizing the limited size of the school enrollment, we feel three grades per teacher would be unrealistic and we feel the staff level for school year 1980-81 is adequate. Losing other staff would be detrimental to the student body. The present staff will be able to provide adequate instruction and deal with special academic problems of students. We recommend the BIA provide us with this minimum staffing level commensurate with the budget.

In addition, we would like to maintain a balance of per pupil hours and grades to be taught in one group per teacher. We realize the standards provided by the Louisiana State Department of Education are not easily applied, therefore we request the BIA to assist us in developing a per pupil hour and grades to be taught in one group standard for our teaching staff.

Concluding Statement

We have found our school to be the most valuable tool that is used by our most valuable asset - our children. Understanding our situation is difficult indeed, if only numbers are considered; however, if the Chitimacha Day School Program is allowed to diminish beyond effectiveness, only the futures of the children and tribe will be affected. At this point, programs which have been made available through the assistance of the BIA, have and will continue to be effective (note figure 7) if funds remain. We do not mean to downplay the tremendous achievements we, as a tribe and the BIA have made together, but we wish to continue and not retreat to a nonexistent program of the thirties.

EXHIBIT A

DRAFT EDUCATION STANDARDS (OUTLINE)
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS OPERATED SCHOOLS

- Administrative Service Standards
  - A. Written statement of philosophy and major purposes.
  - B. Local school educational plan.
  - C. Research, development and innovation.
  - D. Administration/school board roles.
  - E. School - community relationships.
  - F. Site facilities - management control.
  - G. Management services.
  - H. Staffing - organization.
  - I. Policies - practices - procedures.
  - J. Total school evaluation.
  - K. Accreditation/certification.

- Instructional Services Standards
  - A. Needs assessment.
  - B. Curriculum.
  - C. Instruction.
  - D. Instructional program levels.
  - E. Staffing.
  - F. Instructional materials and library-media centers.
  - G. Evaluation.
  - H. Specialized school programs.
  - I. Vocational programs.

- Student Services
  - A. Health and safety.
  - B. Food service program.
  - C. Student activities, recreation, government, extra-curricular activities.
  - D. Pupil transportation.
  - E. Student rights, responsibility and discipline.
  - F. Counseling.
  - G. Student funds, enterprises and banks.